

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of pretreating a sample in preparation for immunologically assaying ~~the~~ a total amount of adiponectin present in the sample, ~~which comprises comprising:~~

~~adding, to an adiponectin-containing sample,~~ at least one reactant selected from the group consisting of a reducing agent, an acid or a salt thereof, a surfactant, and a protease to the sample;; and

allowing the ~~same~~ reactant to react with the sample without boiling ~~together with the combined sample and reactant;~~

wherein the sample is an adiponectin multimer-containing sample.

Claim 2 (Cancelled).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method according to ~~claim 1 or 2~~ claim 1, wherein the protease is a microorganism-derived protease or a protease obtained through gene recombination technology.

Claim 4 (Original): The method according to claim 3, wherein the microorganism is selected from the group consisting of microorganisms which belong to the genus *Bacillus*, genus *Streptomyces*, or genus *Aspergillus*.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn): An agent for pretreating a sample for immunologically assaying the total amount of adiponectin present in the sample, wherein the agent contains at least one of a reducing agent, an acid or a salt thereof, a surfactant, and a protease; and, in

use, the pretreatment agent is allowed to react with the sample without undergoing boiling together with the sample.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): The agent according to claim 5, wherein the immunological assay is performed by making use of an insoluble carrier on which an anti-adiponectin antibody is put.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn): The agent according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the protease is a microorganism-derived protease or a protease obtained through gene recombination technology.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): The agent according to claim 7, wherein the microorganism is selected from the group consisting of microorganisms which belong to the genus *Bacillus*, genus *Streptomyces*, or genus *Aspergillus*.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A method for measuring ~~the~~ a total amount of adiponectin present in a sample, comprising:

~~adding, to an adiponectin-containing sample,~~ at least one reactant selected from the group consisting of a reducing agent, an acid or a salt thereof, a surfactant, and a protease to the sample;

~~allowing the same reactant to react with the sample without boiling together with the combined sample and reactant;~~ and

subsequently performing an immunological assay of the sample for adiponectin; wherein the sample is an adiponectin multimer-containing sample.

Claim 10 (Original): The method according to claim 9, wherein the immunological assay is performed by making use of an insoluble carrier on which an anti-adiponectin antibody is put.

Claim 11 (Original): The method according to claim 9 or 10, wherein the protease is a microorganism-derived protease or a protease obtained through gene recombination technology.

Claim 12 (Original): The method according to claim 11, wherein the microorganism is selected from the group consisting of microorganisms which belong to the genus *Bacillus*, genus *Streptomyces*, or genus *Aspergillus*.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn): An immunoassay reagent for immunologically assaying the total amount of adiponectin present in a sample, wherein the reagent includes a first reagent and a second reagent, the first reagent contains at least one of a reducing agent, an acid or a salt thereof, a surfactant and a protease, the second reagent contains an insoluble carrier with an antibody for determining a level of adiponectin, and the reaction between the sample and the first reagent is carried out without boiling of the reaction system.